
SPEECH

OF THE

Right Hon. William Pitt,

&c. &c.



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S P E E C H

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT, *K*

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 1799.

*On offering to the House the RESOLUTIONS which he proposed as the BASIS OF AN UNION between
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,*

*To which are added the SPEECHES of the Right Honourable
JOHN FOSTER, on the 12th and 15th of August,
1785, on the BILL for effectuating the INTER-
COURSE and COMMERCE between Great
Britain and Ireland, on permanent and
equitable Principles, for the mutual
Benefit of both Kingdoms.*

DUBLIN:

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1799.

SPEECH

OF THE

HIGH COURTS

WILLIAM PITT

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

THURSDAY JANUARY 24 1799

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DUBLIN

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAULS CHURCH-YARD

S P E E C H

OF THE

Right Hon. William Pitt,

&c. &c.

The Speaker having read HIS MAJESTY'S
MESSAGE, viz.

GEORGE REX.

“ His Majesty is persuaded that the unremitting industry
“ with which our enemies persevere in their avowed de-
“ sign of effecting the Separation of Ireland from this
“ Kingdom, cannot fail to engage the particular attention
“ of Parliament; and His Majesty recommends it to this
“ House to consider of the most effectual means of counter-
“ acting and finally defeating this design; and he trusts
“ that a review of all the circumstances which have
“ recently occurred (joined to the sentiment of mutual
“ affection and common interest,) will dispose the Parlia-
“ ment of both Kingdoms to provide, in the manner
B “ which

“ which they shall judge most expedient, for settling such
 “ a complete and final adjustment as may best tend to im-
 “ prove and perpetuate a Connection essential for their
 “ common security, and to augment and consolidate the
 “ Strength, Power, and Resources of the British Empire.”

G. R.

Mr. PITT *rose, and spoke as follows :*

SIR,

WHEN I proposed to the House, the last time this subject was before them, to fix this day for the further consideration of His Majesty's Message, I certainly indulged the hope that the result of a similar communication to the Parliament of Ireland would have opened a more favourable Prospect than at present exists, of the speedy accomplishment of a measure which I then stated, and which I still consider, to be of the greatest importance to the power, the stability, and the general welfare of the Empire ; to the immediate interests of both kingdoms—and more particularly to the peace, the tranquillity, and the safety of Ireland : in this hope, I am sorry to say, I have for the present been disappointed, by the proceedings of the Irish House of Commons, of
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which we have been informed since this subject was last under consideration.

I feel and know that the Parliament of Ireland possesses the power, the intire competence, on the behalf of that country, alike to accept or reject a proposition of this nature—a power which I am by no means inclined to dispute. I see that at the present moment one House of Parliament in Ireland has expressed a repugnance, even to the consideration of this measure.—Feeling, Sir, as I have already stated, that it is important, not only as it tends to the general prosperity of the Empire of Great Britain, but (what, under every situation, must always be to me an object of the greatest moment) feeling that it was designed and calculated to increase the prosperity and ensure the safety of Ireland, I must have seen with the deepest regret that, at the very first moment, and before the nature of the measure could be known, it was so received.

But whatever may have been my feelings upon this subject, knowing that it is the undoubted

right of the Legislature of Ireland to reject or to adopt such measures as may appear to them injurious or beneficial, far be it from me to speak of its determination in any other terms but those of respect. Let it not, therefore, be imagined that I am inclined to press any sentiment, however calculated it may appear to me to benefit every member of the Empire, in any manner which may lead to hostile discussion between two kingdoms, whose mutual happiness and safety depend upon their being strictly and cordially united. But while I admit and respect the rights of the Parliament of Ireland, I feel that, as a Member of the Parliament of Great Britain, I also have a Right to exercise, and a Duty to perform. That Duty is to express, as distinctly as I can, the general nature and outline of the Plan, which, in my conscience, I think would tend in the strongest manner to ensure the safety and the happiness of both kingdoms.

While I feel, therefore, that as long as the House of Commons of Ireland view the subject in the light they do at present, there is no chance
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of its adoption, I do not think that I ought on that account to abstain from submitting it to the consideration of this Parliament; on the contrary I think it only the more necessary to explain distinctly the principles of the Measure, and to state the grounds upon which it appears to me to be entitled to the approbation of the Legislature.

If Parliament, when it is in possession of the basis upon which this Plan is founded, and of its general outline, should be of opinion with me, that it is founded upon fair, just, and equitable principles, calculated to produce mutual advantages to the two Kingdoms—if Parliament, I say, upon full explanation, and after mature deliberation, should be of that opinion, I should propose that its determination should remain recorded as that by which the Parliament of Great Britain were ready to abide, leaving it to the Legislature of Ireland to reject or to adopt hereafter, upon a full consideration of the subject.

There is no man will deny that in a great question of this nature, involving in it objects which,

which, in the first instance, are more likely to be decided upon by passion than by judgment; in a question in which an honest but, I must be allowed to say, a mistaken sense of National Pride is so likely to operate, that much misconstruction and misconception must inevitably happen. It therefore becomes the more necessary that the intentions of the Government which proposes the Measure, and the principles of the Measure itself, should be distinctly understood. But, Sir, in stating that intention and those principles, I look to something more than a mere vindication of Government for having proposed the Measure. I do entertain a confidence, even under the apparent discouragement of the opinion expressed by the Irish House of Commons, that this Measure is founded upon such clear, such demonstrable grounds of utility, is so calculated to add to the strength and power of the Empire, (in which the safety of Ireland is included, and from which it never can be separated) and is attended with so many advantages to Ireland in particular, that all that can be necessary for its ultimate adoption is, that it should be stated distinctly, temperately, and fully, and that it should be left to unprejudiced,

diced, the dispassionate, the sober judgment of the Parliament of Ireland. I wish that those whose interests are involved in this measure should have time for its consideration—I wish that time should be given to the Landed, to the Mercantile and Manufacturing Interest, that they should look at it with all its bearings, and that they should coolly examine and sift the popular arguments by which it has been opposed, and that then they should give their deliberate and final judgment.

I am the more encouraged in this hope of the ultimate success of this measure, when I see, notwithstanding all the prejudices which it has excited, that barely more than one-half of the members that attended the House of Commons were adverse to it; and that in the other House of Parliament in Ireland, containing, as it does, so large a portion of the property of the kingdom, it was approved of by a large majority.—When I have reason to believe that the sentiments of a large part of the People of that Country are favourable to it; and that much of the Manufacturing, and of the Commercial Interest of Ireland are already sensible
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how much it is calculated to promote their advantage, I think, when it is more deliberately examined, and when it is seen in what temper it is here proposed and discussed, that it will still terminate in that which can alone be a fortunate result.

It would be vain indeed to hope that a proposition upon which prejudices are so likely to operate, and which is so liable to misconception, should be unanimously approved. But the approbation I hope for is, that of the Parliament of Ireland, and of the intelligent part of the Public of that Country. It is with a view to this object that I think it my duty to bring this measure forward at present; not for the sake of urging its immediate adoption, but that it may be known and recorded; that the intention of the British Parliament may be known, in the hope that it will produce similar sentiments among our Countrymen in Ireland. With this view it is my intention not to go at present into any detailed statement of the plan, because should it ultimately be adopted, the minuter parts must necessarily become the objects of much distinct discussion; but to give such a general statement of the nature of

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the measure as will enable the House to form a correct judgment upon it.

I shall therefore, Sir, before I sit down, open to the House a string of Resolutions, comprising the general heads of this plan. It will be necessary for me, for the purpose of discussing those Resolutions with regularity and convenience, to move that the House should resolve itself into a Committee. And I have already stated, that it is not my intention then to press the Committee to come to an immediate decision upon the Resolutions; but if, upon full and deliberate examination, the Resolutions which I shall have the honour to propose, and which contain as much as is necessary for an outline of the plan, shall be approved, my opinion is, that nothing can contribute more to obviate any doubts and dissatisfaction which may exist, than that Parliament should adopt those Resolutions, and that it should then humbly leave them at the foot of the Throne, leaving it to HIS MAJESTY'S wisdom to communicate them to the Parliament of Ireland, whenever circumstances should appear favourable to such a Measure. I shall therefore, Sir, proceed as

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shortly as I can to state to the House the nature of the Resolutions, and of the Address which I shall propose to accompany them, if it should be the pleasure of the House to adopt them.

Having now, Sir, explained to the House the mode I mean to pursue, and my reasons for persisting, under the present circumstances, in submitting this Measure to the consideration of Parliament, I will endeavour to state the general grounds on which it rests, the general arguments by which it is recommended, and to give a short view of the particulars of the Plan.

As to the general principle upon which the whole of this Measure is founded, I am happy to observe, from what passed upon a former occasion, that there is not a probability of any difference of opinion. The general principle, to which both sides of the House perfectly acceded, is, that a perpetual Connection between Great Britain and Ireland was essential to the interests of both. The only Honourable Gentleman who, when this subject was before the House on a former

former day, opposed the consideration of the Plan altogether, stated, in terms as strong as I could wish, the necessity of preserving the strictest Connection between the two Countries. I most cordially agree with him in that opinion, but I then stated, that I do not barely wish for the maintenance of that Connection as tending to add to the general strength of the Empire, but I wish for the maintenance of it with a peculiar regard to the local interests of Ireland, with a regard to every thing that can give to Ireland its due weight and importance, as a great member of the Empire. I wish for it with a view of giving to that Country the means of improving all its great natural Resources, and of giving it a full participation of all those blessings which this Country so eminently enjoys.

Considering the subject in this point of view, and assuming it as a proposition not to be controverted, that it is the duty of those who wish to promote the Interest and Prosperity of both Countries, to maintain the strongest connection between them, let me ask, what is the situation of Affairs that has called us to the discussion of this subject?

subject? This very connection, the necessity of which has been admitted on all hands, has been attacked by Foreign Enemies, and by Domestic Traitors. The dissolution of that connection is the great object of the hostility of the common Enemies of both Countries, it is almost the only remaining hope with which they now continue the contest. Baffled and defeated as they have hitherto been, they still retain the hope, they are still meditating attempts, to dissolve that connection. God grant that in this instance the same favour of Divine Providence, which has in so many instances protected this Empire, may again interpose in our favour, and that the attempts of the Enemy to separate the two Countries, may tend ultimately to knit them more closely together, to strengthen a Connection, the best pledge for the happiness of both, and so add to that power which forms the chief barrier to the civilized world, against the destructive principles, the dangerous projects, and the unexampled usurpation of France. This Connection has been attacked not only by the avowed Enemies of both Countries, but by internal Treason, acting in concert with the designs of the Enemy. Internal Treason,

Treason, which ingrafted Jacobinism on those diseases which necessarily grew out of the State and Condition of Ireland.

Thinking, then, as we all must think, that a close Connection with Ireland is essential to the interests of both Countries, and seeing how much this Connection is attacked, let it not be insinuated that it is unnecessary, much less improper, at this arduous and important crisis, to see whether some new arrangements, some fundamental regulations, are not necessary, to guard against the threatened danger. The foreign and domestic Enemies of these kingdoms have shewn, that they think this the vulnerable point in which they may be most successfully attacked; let us derive advantage, if we can, from the hostility of our Enemies — let us profit by the designs of an Enemy, who, if his conduct displays no true wisdom, at least possesses in an eminent degree that species of wisdom which is calculated for the promotion of mischief. They know upon what footing that Connection rests at this moment between the two Countries, and they feel the most ardent hope, that the two Parliaments will be infatuated enough

enough not to render their designs abortive, by fixing that Connection upon a more solid basis.

These circumstances I am sure will not be denied. And if upon other grounds we had any doubt, these circumstances alone ought to induce us, deliberately and dispassionately, to review the situation of the two Countries, and to endeavour to find out a proper remedy for an evil, the existence of which is but too apparent. It requires but a moment's reflection, for any man who has marked the progress of events, to decide upon the true state and character of this Connection. It is evidently one which does not afford that security which, even in times less dangerous and less critical than the present, would have been necessary, to enable the empire to avail itself of its strength and its resources.

When I last addressed the House on this subject, I stated that the settlement, which was made in 1782, so far from deserving the name of a Final Adjustment, was one that left the Connection between Great Britain and Ireland exposed to all the attacks of Party, and all the effects of accident.

accident. That Settlement consisted in the demolition of the System which before held the two Countries together. Let me not be understood as expressing any regret at the termination of that System. I disapproved of it, because I thought it was unworthy the liberality of Great Britain, and injurious to the interests of Ireland. But to call that a System in itself—to call that a glorious fabric of human wisdom—which is no more than the mere demolition of another System—is a perversion of terms which, however prevalent of late, can only be the effect of gross misconception, or of great hypocrisy. We boast that we have done every thing, when we have merely destroyed all that before existed, without substituting any thing in its place. Such was the *Final Adjustment* of 1782; and I can prove it to be so, not only from the plainest reasoning, but I can prove it by the opinion expressed by the British Parliament at that very time. I can prove it by the opinion expressed by those very Ministers by whom it was proposed and conducted. I can prove it by the opinion of that very Government who boast of having effected a Final Adjustment. I refer, for what I have said, to proofs which they will find it

very

very difficult to answer ; I mean their own acts, which will plainly shew that they were of opinion that a new System would be necessary. But, Sir, I will go farther—I will also produce the authority of one of those whose influence, on the present occasion, has been peculiarly exerted to prevent the discussion of the question in Ireland—of one, of whom I do not wish to speak but with respect, but for whom, nevertheless, I should convey an idea of more respect, than I can now feel to be due to him, if I were merely to describe him as the person who fills the same situation, in the House of Commons of Ireland, which you, Sir, hold among us, and of which on all occasions *you* discharge the duties with a dignity and impartiality which reflects so much credit on yourself, and so well supports the character and authority of the House.

On a former night, I read an Extract from the Journals, to shew what was the opinion even of those by whom the Final Adjustment was proposed, of that Measure. It would there appear, that the Message was sent to the Parliament of Ireland, recommending to them the adoption of
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some Plan for a Final Adjustment between the two Countries, and wishing to know what were the grounds of the grievances of which they complained. In answer to this Message, the Parliament of Ireland stated certain grievances, the principal of which was, the power claimed by the Parliament of Great Britain of making Laws to bind Ireland; but, with respect to that part of the Message which related to the propriety of adopting some Measures for a final adjustment between the two Countries, they were wholly silent. This Address was laid before the Parliament of Great Britain, to whom a similar Message had been sent, and on that ground was moved the Repeal of what was called the Declaratory Act, which Motion was assented to by the British Parliament. This satisfaction was complete to Ireland, as far as related to the grievance of which her Parliament had complained, viz. the Power of the British Parliament of making Laws for Ireland, because, by the Repeal of the Declaratory Act, that power was given up. But so far was the Minister of that day from considering that the Repeal of that Law finally terminated all differences, and established the Connection between the two Coun-

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tries upon a solid basis, that he thought it necessary to move that a farther Settlement was indispensable for the maintenance of that Connection.

[Mr. SHERIDAN across the Table, desired that that part of the Journals to which Mr. PITT alluded, might be read.]

Mr. PITT continued. Sir, I have stated the substance of the Journals correctly; they were read on a former night, and the Honourable Gentleman may, if he chooses, have them read again.* If he does he will find that they fully justify the statement I have made, but I beg that at present I may not be interrupted. I do maintain, that upon a reference to the Journals of the period to which I have alluded, it will appear that a farther agreement between Great Britain and Ireland is there stated, in the opinion of the Administration of the day, to be absolutely necessary.

I beg farther to state, that after the Bill of which so much has been said, was passed, an Address to HIS MAJESTY was moved and carried, praying him to take such further measures as to him seemed proper, to strengthen the Connection

* Vide Appendix.

between

between the two Countries. HIS MAJESTY'S most Gracious Answer, stating, that in compliance with the Address, he would immediately take such measures as might be necessary for that purpose, was delivered to the House by an Honourable Gentleman who then filled the office of Secretary of State, and whom we have not lately seen in the House, though he still continues to be a Member of it. I do assert, without the least fear of contradiction from any Gentleman whatever, that it was in the contemplation of the Government of that day, to adopt some measures of the nature alluded to in the Address; since that period, however, no such measure has been taken. I do also maintain, that that very system which by these very Ministers who brought it forward was found to be imperfect, even for the purpose of maintaining the Connection between the two Countries, remains at this moment in the same imperfect state. It leaves the two Countries with separate and independent Legislatures, connected only with this tie, that the Third Estate in both Countries is the same—that the Executive Government is the same—that the Crown exercises its power of assenting to Irish Acts of Parliament

under the Great Seal of Great Britain, and by the advice of British Ministers.

This is the only principle of Connection which is left by the Final Adjustment of 1782. Whether this is a sufficient tie to unite them in time of Peace ; whether in time of War it is sufficient to consolidate their strength against a Common Enemy ; whether it is sufficient to guard against those local jealousies which must necessarily sometimes exist between countries so connected ; whether it is calculated to give to Ireland all the important commercial and political advantages which she would derive from a closer Connection with Great Britain ; whether it can give to both Nations that degree of strength and prosperity which must be the result of such a Measure as the present, I believe need only to be stated to be decided.

But I have already said, that I have upon this point, the authority of an opinion to which I before alluded—an opinion delivered upon a very important Measure, very soon after the Final Adjustment of 1782. The Measure to which I refer, was that of the Commercial Propositions which
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were brought forward in 1785. I am not now going to enter into a discussion of the merits of that Measure. The best, perhaps, that can be said of it is, that it went as far as circumstances would then permit, to draw the two Countries to a closer Connection. But those who think that the Adjustment of 1782 was final, and that it contained all that was necessary for the establishment of the Connection between the two Countries upon a firm basis, can hardly contend that the Commercial Propositions of 1785 were necessary to prevent the danger of separation between the two Countries, and to prevent the conflicting operation of Independent Legislatures. Yet, if I am not mistaken, there will be found, upon a reference to better Records than those in which Parliamentary Debates are usually stated (I mean a statement of what passed in the discussion upon those Propositions fourteen years ago, made, as I have understood, by some of the principal parties themselves) that the CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER of that day in Ireland, in a Debate upon the Irish Propositions, held this language—"If this infatuated Country gives up the present offer, she may look for it again in vain." Here the

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Right Honourable Gentleman was happily mistaken ; Ireland has again had the offer of the same advantages, but more complete, and in all respects better calculated to attain their object ; and this offer the Right Honourable Gentleman has exerted all his influence to reject. But he goes on to say—" THINGS CANNOT REMAIN AS THEY ARE—Commercial jealousy is roused—
 " it will encrease with *two independent Legislatures*
 " —and without an united interest in commerce,
 " in a commercial Empire, political Union will
 " receive many shocks, and *separation of interest*
 " must threaten *separation of Connection*, which
 " every *honest Irishman* must shudder to look at,
 " as a possible event."

Gentlemen will have the goodness to observe, that I am not now quoting these expressions as pledges given by that Right Honourable Gentleman that he would support a proposal for a Union between the two Countries, but I am adducing them to prove that the situation of the two Countries after the Final Adjustment of 1782, was such, in his opinion, as led to the danger of a separation between them. I am not now arguing
 that

that a Legislative Union is the only measure which can possibly be adopted, but I am contending that the Adjustment of 1782 was never considered as final, by those who now state it to be so as an argument against the consideration of the present measure. How the Honourable Gentleman on the other side of the House will evade this authority I do not know ;—an authority too, which, I must observe, he seems much more inclined to treat with respect than he was formerly.

But, Sir, it does not stop there. What is the evil to which he alludes ? Commercial jealousies between two Countries acting upon the laws of two independent Legislatures, and from the danger of those Legislatures acting with jealousy to each other.—How can this evil be remedied ? By two means only ; either by some Compact entered into by the Legislatures of the two Countries respecting the mode of forming their commercial regulations, or else by blending the two Legislatures together ; these are the only two means. I defy the wit of man to point out a third. The mode of compact was proposed in 1785, but unfortunately, in spite of that Right Honourable
. Gentleman's

Gentleman's eloquence and authority, who then stated the importance of guarding against the evil, it so happened that doctrines, derived chiefly from this side of the water, succeeded in convincing the Parliament of Ireland, that it would be inconsistent with their independence, to enter into any compact whatever. We have then the authority of that Rt. Honourable Gentleman to whom I have so often alluded, that the unsettled state in which the matter was left, would give, "Political Union many shocks, and lead to a separation of Connection." The experiment of a mutual Compact has been tried without success; the arrangement of that sort, which was proposed in 1785, in order to obviate the inconveniences stated by the Right Honourable Gentleman, was then attacked with the same success against his authority, as another and more effectual remedy has recently experienced under his auspices. The result then is, you must remain in the state which that Right Honourable Gentleman has described, with the seeds of separation in the system now established, and with the Connection, on which the mutual prosperity of both Countries depends in danger of being hourly dissolved, or you must again recur

recur to the proposal of a compact similar to that rejected in 1785, or you must resort to the best and most effectual remedy,—A LEGISLATIVE UNION.

I have dwelt longer, perhaps, upon this part of the subject than was absolutely necessary, because I believe there is scarcely any man who has ever asked himself, whether there is a solid, permanent system of Connection between the two Countries, who could, upon reflection, answer the question in the affirmative. But besides the authorities of the persons who made the arrangement in 1782, and of those who have since treated of it, to shew that it was not deemed to be final and complete ; I have further the test of experience to shew how imperfect it was, and how inadequate in practice to the great object of cementing the Connection, and placing it beyond the danger of being dissolved. In the single instance, which has occurred (and that a melancholy one which all of us deplored) in which we could feel the effects of two jarring Legislatures we did feel it. On that occasion, it might have produced the most signal calamities, had we not

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been rescued from its danger by an event, to which no man can now look back without feeling the utmost joy and exultation; feelings, which subsequent circumstances have served to heighten and confirm. Every Gentleman will know, that I must allude to the Regency. With two independent Legislatures, acting upon different principles, it was accident alone that preserved the identity of the Executive Power, which is the bond and security of the Connection: And even then the Executive authority, though vested in one person, would have been held by him by two different tenures, by one tenure in England, by another in Ireland, had not the interposition of Providence prevented a circumstance pregnant with the most imminent perils, and which might have operated to a separation of the two kingdoms.

After seeing the recorded opinion of Parliament, of those who made the arrangement of 1782, and after the decided testimony of experience on the subject, within the short period of sixteen years, perhaps, it is hardly necessary to appeal to farther
proofs

proofs of its inadequacy, or to desire Gentlemen to look forward to possible cases, which I could easily put, and which will naturally suggest themselves to the minds of all, who chuse to turn their attention to the subject.

But when we consider the distinct powers possessed by the two Legislatures on all the great questions of Peace and War, of alliances and confederacies,—(for they each have in principle, a right to discuss them and decide upon them, though one of them has hitherto been wisely restrained by discretion, from the exercise of that right),—have we not seen circumstances to induce us to think it possible, at least, that on some of these important questions the opinions and decisions of the two Parliaments might have been at variance? Are we talking of an indissoluble Connection, when we see it thus perpetually liable to be endangered? Can we really think that the interests of the Empire, or of its different branches rest upon a safe and solid basis at present? I am anxious to discuss this point closely with any man, either here or in Ireland. Will

it be said, that the Parliament of the latter Country is bound by our decision on the question of Peace or War? And if not so bound, will any man, looking at human Nature as it is, contend, that there is a sufficient certainty that the decision on that important subject will always be the same in both countries? I should be glad to receive a distinct answer to this question, from the Honourable Gentleman who has declared himself to be as warm a friend to the Connection between the two Countries as I am.

Suppose, for instance, that the present war, which the Parliament of Great Britain considers to be just and necessary, had been voted by the Irish Parliament, to be unjust, unnecessary, extravagant, and hostile to the principles of humanity and freedom.—Would that Parliament have been bound by this Country? If not;—what security have we, at a moment the most important to our common interest and common salvation, that the two Kingdoms should have but one friend and foe? I repeat it; I am eager to hear what can be said in justification of a basis so imperfect and unfound,

found, and liable to be shaken by so many accidents. I have already observed, that in the peculiar circumstances of the present moment, we may find strong reasons to prove the necessity of correcting the system of Connection between this Country and Ireland, of supplying its imperfections, and strengthening its weakness, than are to be found at any former period.

Having thus stated, and I think sufficiently proved, that the Settlement of 1782, in every point of view in which it can be considered, is imperfect, and inadequate to the object of maintaining the connection between the two kingdoms, I proceed next to the circumstances which peculiarly call upon us at the present moment to remedy that imperfection.

This Country is at this time engaged in the most important, and momentous conflict that ever occurred in the History of the World; a conflict in which Great Britain is distinguished for having made the only manly and successful stand against the common enemies of civilized society. We see the point in which that Enemy think us the
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most affailable—Are we not then bound in policy and prudence, to strengthen that vulnerable point, involved as we are in a contest of Liberty against Despotism—of Property against Plunder and Rapine—of Religion and Order against Impiety and Anarchy? There was a time when this would have been termed declamation ; but, unfortunately, long and bitter experience has taught us to feel that it is only the feeble and imperfect representation of those calamities (the result of French Principles and French Arms) which are attested by the wounds of a bleeding world.

Is there a man who does not admit the importance of a measure which, at such a crisis, may augment the strength of the Empire, and thereby ensure its safety? Would not that benefit to Ireland be of itself so solid, so inestimable, that, in comparison with it, all Commercial Interests, and the preservation of local habits and manners, would be trifling, even if they were endangered by the present measure ;—which they undoubtedly are not? The people of Ireland are proud, I believe, of being associated with us in the great contest in which we are engaged, and must feel
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the advantage of augmenting the general force of the Empire. That the present measure is calculated to produce that effect, is a proposition which I think cannot be disputed. There is not in any Court of Europe a Statesman so ill informed as not to know, that the general power of the Empire would be increased to a very great extent indeed, by such a consolidation of the strength of the two kingdoms. In the course of the Century every writer of any information on the subject has held the same language, and in the general strength of the Empire both Kingdoms are more concerned than in any particular interests which may belong to either. If we were to ask the Ministers of our Allies, what measure they thought the most likely to augment the power of the British Empire, and consequently increase that strength by which they were now protected—if we were to ask the Agent of our Enemies, what measure would be the most likely to render their designs abortive—the answer would be the same in both cases, viz. the firm consolidation of every part of the Empire.

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There is another consideration well worth attention. Recollect what are the peculiar means by which we have been enabled to resist the unequalled and eccentric efforts of France, without any diminution, nay, with an increase, of our general prosperity—what, but the great Commercial Resources which we possess? A Measure, then, which must communicate to such a mighty Limb of the Empire as Ireland, all the Commercial advantages which Great Britain possesses, which will open the markets of the one Country to the other, which will give them both the common use of their Capital, must, by diffusing a large portion of wealth into Ireland, considerably increase the Resources, and consequently the strength, of the whole Empire.

But it is not merely in this general view, that I think the Question ought to be considered.—We ought to look to it with a view peculiarly to the permanent Interest and security of Ireland. When that Country was threatened with the double danger of hostile attacks by Enemies without, and of Treason within, from what quarter did she
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derive the means of her deliverance?—from the Naval Force of Great Britain—from the voluntary exertions of her Military of every description, not called for by Law—and from her pecuniary resources, added to the loyalty and energy of the Inhabitants of Ireland itself;—of which it is impossible to speak with too much praise, and which shews how well they deserve to be called the Brethren of Britons. Their own courage might, perhaps have ultimately succeeded, in repelling the dangers by which they were threatened, but it would have been after a long contest, and after having waded through seas of blood. Are we sure that the same ready and effectual assistance which we have happily afforded, on the present occasion, will be always equally within our power? Great Britain has always felt a common interest in the safety of Ireland; but that common interest was never so obvious and urgent as when the Common Enemy made her attack upon Great Britain, through the medium of Ireland, and when their attack upon Ireland went to deprive her of her Connection with Great Britain, and to substitute in stead, the new Government of the French Republic. When that danger threatened Ireland,

the purse of Great Britain was open for the wants of Ireland, as for the necessities of England.

I do not, Sir, state these circumstances, as upbraiding Ireland for the benefits we have conferred; far from it; but I state them with pleasure, as shewing the friendship and good will with which this Country has acted towards her. But if struggles of this sort may and must return again, if the worst dangers are those which are yet to come, dangers which may be greater from being more disguised—if those situations may arise when the same means of relief are not in our power, what is the remedy that reason and policy point out? It is to identify them with us—it is to make them part of the same Community, by giving them a full share of those accumulated blessings which are diffused throughout Great Britain; it is, in a word, by giving them a full participation of the Wealth, the Powers and the Glory of the British Empire. If then this Measure comes recommended not only by the obvious defects of the system which now exists, but that it has also the pre-eminent recommendation of increasing the general power of the Empire, and of guarding
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against future danger from the Common Enemy, we are next to consider it as to its effects upon the internal condition of Ireland.

I know perfectly well, that as long as Ireland is separated from Great Britain, any attempt on our part to provide measures which we might think salutary, as respecting questions of contending sects or parties, of the claimed rights of the Catholics, or of the precautions necessary for the security of the Protestants—I know that all these, though they may have been brought forward by the very persons who are the advocates of the Final Adjustment in 1782, were, in fact, attacks upon the Independence of the Irish Parliament, and attempts to usurp the Right of deciding on points which can only be brought within our province by compact. Until the Kingdoms are united, any attempt to make regulations here for the internal state of Ireland must certainly be a violation of her Independence. But feeling as I do, for their interests and their welfare, I cannot be inattentive to the events that are passing before me; I must therefore repeat, that whoever looks at the circumstances to which I have alluded—whoever considers that the Enemy

have shewn by their conduct, that they considered Ireland as the weakest and most vulnerable part of the Empire ; whoever reflects upon those dreadful and inexcusable cruelties instigated by the Enemies of both Countries, and upon those lamentable severities by which the exertions for the defence of Ireland were unhappily, but unavoidably, attended, and the necessity of which is itself one great aggravation of the Crimes and Treasons which led to them, must feel that, as it now stands composed, in the hostile division of its Sects, in the animosities existing between ancient Settlers and original Inhabitants, in the ignorance and want of Civilization, which marks that Country more than almost any other Country in Europe, in the unfortunate prevalence of Jacobin Principles, arising from these causes, and augmenting their malignity, and which have produced that distressed state which we now deplore ; every one, I say, who reflects upon all these circumstances, must agree with me in thinking, that there is no cure but in the formation of a General Imperial Legislature, free alike from terror and from resentment, removed from the danger and agitation, and uninflamed by the prejudices and passions of that distracted Country.

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I know that it is impossible, if we wish to consider this subject properly, to consider it in any other point of view than as it affects the Empire in general. I know that the interests of the two Countries must be taken together, and that a man cannot speak as a true Englishman, unless he speaks as a true Irishman, nor as a true Irishman, unless he speaks as a true Englishman: But if it was possible to separate them, and I could consider myself as addressing you, not as interested for the Empire at large, but for Ireland alone, I should say, that it would be indispensably necessary, for the sake of that Country, to compose its present distractions, by the adoption of another system:—I should say, that the establishment of an Imperial Legislature was the only means of healing its wounds and of restoring it to tranquillity. I must here take the liberty of alluding to some topics which were touched upon during the discussion of the former night.

Among the great and known defects of Ireland, one of the most prominent features is, its want of industry and a capital; how are those wants to be supplied, but by blending more closely with
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Ireland, the industry and the capital of this Country. But, above all, in the great leading distinctions between the People of Ireland, I mean their religious distinctions, what is their situation?—The Protestant feels that the claims of the Catholics threaten the existence of the Protestant ascendancy; while, on the other hand, the great body of Catholics feel the establishment of the National Church, and their exclusion from the exercise of certain rights and privileges, a grievance. Between the two, it becomes a matter of difficulty in the minds of many persons, whether it would be better to listen only to the fears of the former, or to grant the claims of the latter.

I am well aware that the subject of religious distinction is a dangerous and delicate topic, especially when applied to a country such as Ireland; the situation of which is different in this respect from that of every other. Where the established religion of the State is the same as the general religion of the Empire, and where the property of the Country is in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons professing that established religion, while the religion of a great majority

majority of the people is different, it is not easy to say, on general principles, what system of Church Establishments in such a Country would be free from difficulty and inconvenience. By many I know it will be contended, that the religion professed by a majority of the people, would at least be entitled to an equality of Privileges. I have heard such an argument urged in this House; but those who apply it without qualification to the case of Ireland, forget surely the principles on which English Interest and English Connection has been established in that Country, and on which its present Legislature is formed. No man can say, that, in the present state of things, and while Ireland remains a separate kingdom, full concessions could be made to the Catholics, without endangering the State, and shaking the Constitution of Ireland to its centre.

On the other hand, without anticipating the discussion, or the propriety of agitating the question, or saying how soon or how late it may be fit to discuss it; two propositions are indisputable: First, When the conduct of the Catholics shall be such as to make it safe for the Government to admit

admit them to the participation of the privileges granted to those of the Established Religion, and when the temper of the times shall be favourable to such a measure. When these events take place, it is obvious that such a question may be agitated in an United, Imperial Parliament, with much greater safety, than it could be in a separate Legislature. In the second place, I think it certain that, even for whatever period it may be thought necessary, after the Union, to withhold from the Catholics the enjoyment of those advantages, many of the objections which at present arise out of their situation would be removed, if the Protestant Legislature were no longer separate and local, but general and Imperial; and the Catholics themselves would at once feel a mitigation of the most goading and irritating of their present causes of complaint.

How far, in addition to this great and leading consideration, it may also be wise and practicable to accompany the measure by some mode of relieving the lower orders from the pressure of Tithes, which in many instances operate at present as a great practical evil, or to make—under
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proper Regulations, and without breaking in on the security of the present Protestant Establishment an effectual and adequate provision for the Catholic Clergy, it is not now necessary to discuss. It is sufficient to say, that these and all other subordinate points connected with the same subject, are more likely to be permanently and satisfactorily settled by an United Legislature, than by any local arrangements. On these grounds I contend, that with a view to providing an effectual remedy for the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, with a view of removing those causes which have endangered, and still endanger its security, the measure which I am now proposing promises to be more effectual than any other which can be devised, and on these grounds alone, if there existed no other, I should feel it my duty to submit it to the House

But, Sir, though what I have thus stated relates most immediately to the great object of healing the dissensions, and providing for the internal tranquillity of Ireland; there are also other objects which, though comparatively with this of inferior importance, are yet in them-

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selves highly material, and in a secondary view, well worthy of attention.

I have heard it asked, when I pressed the measure, what are the positive advantages that Ireland is to derive from it? To this very question I presume the considerations which I have already urged afford a sufficient answer. But, in fact, the question itself is to be considered in another view; and it will be found to bear some resemblance to a question which has been repeatedly put, by some of the Gentlemen opposite to me, during the last six years. What are the advantages which Great Britain has gained by the present war with France?

To this, the brilliant successes of the British army by sea and land, our unexampled naval victories over all our enemies, the solid acquisition of valuable territory, the general increase of our power, the progressive extension of our commerce, and a series of events more glorious than any that ever adorned the page of our history, afford at once an ample and a satisfactory answer. But there is another general answer which we have

have uniformly given, and which would alone be sufficient: it is, that we did not enter into this war for any purpose of ambition; our object was not to acquire, but to preserve; and in this sense, what we have gained by the war is, in one word, **ALL** that we should have lost without it: it is, the preservation of our Constitution, our Independence, our Honour, our Existence as a Nation.

In the same manner I might answer the question with respect to Ireland, I might enumerate the general advantages which Ireland would derive from the effects of the Arrangement to which I have already referred, the Protection which she will secure to herself in the hour of danger. The most effectual means of increasing her Commerce and improving her Agriculture, the command of English Capital, the infusion of English Manners and English Industry, necessarily tending to ameliorate her Condition, to accelerate the progress of internal civilization, and to terminate those feuds and dissensions which now distract the Country, and which she does not possess, within herself, the power either to controul or to extinguish. She would see the avenue to Honours, to distinctions,

and exalted Situations in the general seat of Empire, opened to all those whose abilities and talents enable them to indulge an honourable and laudable ambition.

But, independent of all these advantages, I might also answer, that the question is not what Ireland is to gain, but what she is to preserve: not merely how she may best improve her situation, but how she is to avert a pressing and immediate danger. In this view, what she gains is the preservation of all those blessings arising from the British Constitution, and which are inseparable from her Connexion with Great Britain. Those Blessings of which it has long been the aim of France, in conjunction with domestic traitors, to deprive her, and on their ruins to establish (with all its attendant miseries and horrors) a Jacobin Republic, founded on French Influence, and existing only in subserviency to France.

Such, Sir, would be the answer, if we direct our attention only to the question of general advantage. And here I should be inclined to stop; but since it has also been more particularly asked, what

what are the advantages which she is to gain, in point of Commerce and Manufactures, I am desirous of applying my answer more immediately and distinctly to that part of the subject: and, as I know that the statement will carry more conviction with it, to those who make the inquiry, if given in the words of the Right Honourable Gentleman, to whom, and to whose opinions, I have had more than one occasion to advert in the course of this night, I will read you an extract from his recorded sentiments on the subject, in the year 1785, on this same memorable occasion of the Commercial Propositions. Speaking of a solid and unalterable Compact between the two Countries, speaking expressly of the peculiar importance of insuring the continuance of those Commercial benefits, which she at that time held only at the discretion of this country, he says—
 “ The exportation of Irish Products to England,
 “ amounts to Two Millions and a Half annually ;
 “ and the exportation of British Products, to Ireland,
 “ amounts to but One Million.”

He then proceeds to reason upon the advantage which Ireland would derive, under such circumstances.

circumstances, from guarding against mutual prohibitions; and he accompanies the statement, which I have just read, with this observation—

“ If, indeed, the Adjustment were to take
 “ away the Benefit from Ireland it would be a
 “ good cause for rejecting it; but, as it for ever
 “ confirms all the Advantages we derived from
 “ our Linen Trade, and binds England from
 “ making any law that can be injurious to it,
 “ surely Gentlemen who regard that trade, and
 “ *whose fortunes and rents depend on its prosperity,*
 “ *will not entertain a moment's doubt about embracing the offer.*”

Such was the reasoning of the Irish CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER; which I consider to have been perfectly just. With reference to his late opinions, I do not think I can more forcibly reply, to a person who signs his name to Propositions which declare that the ruin of the Linen Trade of Ireland is likely to be the consequence of an Union, than by opposing to him his own opinion. I shall be able to strengthen the former opinion of that Gentleman, by stating, that the progress
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that has been made in commercial advantages to Ireland, since 1785, has been such as to render his argument still more applicable. What is the nature of that Commerce, explained by the same person, in so concise and forcible a manner, that I am happy to use his own statement? He does not confine himself to the gross amount, but gives the articles in detail:—

“ Britain,” he says, “ imports annually from
 “ us Two Million Five Hundred Thousand
 “ Pounds of our Products, all, or very nearly all,
 “ duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on
 “ them. We import about a Million of her’s,
 “ and raise a Revenue on almost every article of
 “ it, and reserve the power of continuing that
 “ Revenue. She exports to us Salt for our
 “ Fisheries and Provisions; Hops, which we
 “ cannot grow; Coals which we cannot raise;
 “ Tin, which we have not; and Bark, which we
 “ cannot get elsewhere: and all these without re-
 “ serving any duty.”

I will not tire the patience of the House, by reading farther extracts; but the Right Honour-
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able Gentleman's whole Speech, in like manner, points out the advantages of the Commercial Propositions (at that time under consideration) as a ground-work of a Compact between the two Countries, in 1785, on Commercial subjects.—

But how stands the case now? The trade is at this time infinitely more advantageous to Ireland. It will be proved, from the documents which I hold in my hand, as far as relates to the mere interchange of manufactures, that the manufactures, exported to Ireland from Great Britain, in 1797, very little exceeded a Million sterling (the articles of produce amount to nearly the same sum) while Great Britain, on the other hand, imported from Ireland to the amount of near Three Millions in the manufactured articles of Linen and Linen Yarn, and between Two and Three Millions in Provisions and Cattle, besides Corn and other articles of produce.

In addition to these Articles, there are other circumstances of advantage to Ireland. Articles which are essential to her trade and to her subsistence, or serve as raw materials for her manufactures, are sent from hence free of duty. It is expressly

preſſly ſtated on the ſame authority, that all that we take back from Ireland was liable to a Duty in that country on their exports ; ſo that in ſome inſtances we gave them a preference over ourſelves.

The increaſing produce of the chief article of their manufacture, and four-fifths of her whole export trade, are to be aſcribed, not to that *Independent Legiſlature*, but to the liberality of the Britiſh Parliament. It is by the free admiſſion of Linens for our market, and the Bounties granted by the Britiſh Parliament on its re-export, that the Linen-Trade has been brought to the height at which we now ſee it. To the Parliament of this Country, then, it is now owing, that a Market has been opened for her Linen to the amount of three millions. By the Bounty we give to Ireland, we afford her a double market for that article, and (what is ſtill more ſtriking and important) we have prevented a competition againſt her, ariſing from the ſuperior cheapneſs of the Linen-Manufactures of the Continent, by ſubjecting their importation to a Duty of thirty per cent. Nothing would more clearly ſhew what would be the danger

to Ireland from the Competition in all its principal branches of the Linen-Trade, than the simple fact, that we even now import foreign Linens, under this heavy duty, to an amount equal to a seventh part of all that Ireland is able to send us, with the preference that has been stated. By this arrangement alone, we must therefore be considered, either as foregoing between seven and eight hundred thousand pounds per annum in revenue, which we should collect if we chose to levy the same duty on all Linens, Irish as well as Foreign, or on the other hand, as sacrificing perhaps at least a million sterling in the price paid for those articles, by the subjects of this Country, which might be saved, if we allowed the importation of all Linen, Foreign as well as Irish, equally free from Duty.

The present measure is, however, in its effects calculated not merely for a confirmation of the advantages on which the person to whom I have alluded has insisted. It is obvious that a fuller and more perfect connexion of the two countries, from whatever cause it may arise, must produce a greater facility and freedom of commercial intercourse,

tercourse, and ultimately tend to the advantage of both. The benefits to be derived to either country from such an arrangement must indeed, in a great measure, be gradual; but they are not on that account the less certain, and they cannot be stated in more forcible language than in that used in the speech to which I have referred.—

“ Gentlemen undervalue the reduction of British Duties on our Manufactures. I agree with them it may not operate soon, but we are to look forward to a final settlement, and it is impossible but that in time, with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we must be able to sell to them. When commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade take its natural and steady course, the Kingdoms will cease to look to rivalry, each will make that fabrick which it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot make so advantageously. Labour will be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by Bounties, Jealousies, or Legislative Interference, from its natural and beneficial course. This system will attain its real object,

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“ consolidating the strength of the remaining
 “ parts of the Empire, by encouraging the com-
 “ munications of their market among themselves
 “ with preference to every part against all
 “ strangers !”

I am at least, therefore, secure from the design of appearing to deliver any partial or chimerical opinion of my own, when I thus state, on the authority of a person the best informed, and who then judged dispassionately, both the infinite importance to Ireland of securing permanently the great commercial advantages which she now holds at the discretion of Great Britain, and the additional benefit which she would derive from any settlement which opened to her gradually a still more free and compleat commercial intercourse with this country. And while I state thus strongly the commercial advantages to the sister kingdom, I have no alarm lest I should excite any sentiment of jealousy here. I know that the inhabitants of Great Britain wish well to the prosperity of Ireland ;—that, if the Kingdoms are really and solidly united, they feel that to increase the commercial wealth of one Country is not to diminish that

that of the other, but to increase the strength and power of both. But to justify that sentiment, we must be satisfied that the wealth we are pouring into the lap of Ireland is not every day liable to be snatched from us, and thrown into the scale of the enemy. If therefore Ireland is to continue, as I trust it will for ever, an essential part of the integral strength of the British Empire; if her strength is to be permanently ours, and our strength to be hers, neither I, nor any English minister, can ever be deterred by the fear of creating jealousy in the hearts of Englishmen, from stating the advantages of a closer Connexion, or from giving any assistance to the Commercial Prosperity of that Kingdom.

If ever indeed I should have the misfortune to witness the melancholy moment when such principles must be abandoned, when all hope of seeing Ireland permanently and securely connected with this country shall be at an end, I shall at least have the consolation of knowing, that it will not be the want of temper or forbearance, of conciliation, of kindness, or of full explanation on our part, which

which will have produced an event so fatal to Ireland, and so dangerous to Great Britain. If ever the over-bearing power of prejudice and passion shall produce that fatal consequence, it will too late be perceived and acknowledged, that all the great commercial advantages which Ireland at present enjoys, and which are continually increasing, are to be ascribed to the liberal conduct, the fostering care, of the British Empire, extended to the sister kingdom as to a part of ourselves, and not (as has been fallaciously and vainly pretended) to any thing which has been done or can be done by the independent power of her own separate Legislature.

I have thus, Sir, endeavoured to state to you the reasons, why I think this measure adviseable; why I wish it to be proposed to the Parliament of Ireland, with temper and fairness; and why it appears to me, entitled at least to a calm and dispassionate discussion in that Kingdom. I am aware, however, that objections have been urged against the measure, some of which are undoubtedly plausible, and have been but too successful
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in their influence on the Irish Parliament. Of these objections I shall now proceed, as concisely as possible, to take some notice.

The first is, what I heard alluded to by the Honourable Gentleman opposite to me, when his Majesty's Message was brought down; namely That the Parliament of Ireland is incompetent to entertain and discuss the question, or rather, to act upon the measure proposed, without having previously obtained the consent of the people of Ireland, their Constituents. But, Sir, I am led to suppose from what the Honourable Gentleman afterwards stated, that he made this objection, rather by way of deprecating the discussion of the question, than as entertaining the smallest doubt upon it himself. —If, however, the Honourable Gentleman, or any other Gentleman on the other side of the House, should seriously entertain a doubt on the subject, I shall be ready to discuss it with him distinctly, either this night or at any future opportunity. For the present I will assume, that no man can deny the competency of the Parliament of Ireland (representing as it does, in the
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language of our Constitution, “ *lawfully, fully, and freely, all the estates of the people of the realm*”) to make Laws to bind that people, unless he is disposed to distinguish that Parliament from the Parliament of Great Britain; and, while he maintains the independence of the Irish Legislature, yet denies to it the lawful and essential powers of Parliament. No man who maintains the Parliament of Ireland to be co-equal with our own, can deny its competency on this question, unless he means to go the length of denying, at the same moment, the whole of the authority of the Parliament of Great Britain—to shake every principle of legislation—and to maintain, that all the acts passed, and every thing done by Parliament, or sanctioned by its authority, however sacred, however beneficial, is neither more nor less than an act of usurpation. He must not only deny the validity of the union between Scotland and England, but he must deny the authority of every one of the proceedings of the limited Legislature since the Union; nay, Sir, he must go still farther, and deny the authority under which we now sit and deliberate here, as a House of Parliament. Of course, he must deny the validity of the adjustment of 1782, and call
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in question every measure which he has himself been the most forward to have enforced. This point, Sir, is of so much importance, that I think I ought not to suffer the opportunity to pass, without illustrating more fully what I mean. If this principle of the incompetency of Parliament to the decision of the Measure be admitted, or if it be contended, that Parliament has no legitimate authority to discuss and decide upon it, you will be driven to the necessity of recognizing a principle, the most dangerous that ever was adopted in any civilized State. I mean the principle, that Parliament cannot adopt any measure new in its nature, and of great importance, without appealing to the constituent and delegating authority for directions. If that doctrine be true, look to what an extent it will carry you. If such an argument could be set up and maintained, you acted without any legitimate authority when you created the representation of the Principality of Wales, or of either of the Counties Palatine of England. Every Law that Parliament ever made, without that appeal, either as to its own Frame and Constitution, as to the qualification of the electors or the elected, as to

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the great and fundamental point of the succession to the Crown, was made without due authority.

If we turn to Ireland itself, what do Gentlemen think of the power of that Parliament, which, without any fresh delegation from its Protestant constituents, associates to itself all the Catholic electors, and thus destroys a fundamental distinction on which it was formed? God forbid, that I should object to or blame any of these Measures! I am only stating the extent to which the principle (that Parliament has no authority to decide upon the present Measure) will lead; and, if it be admitted in one case, it must be admitted in all. Will any man say, that (although a Protestant Parliament in Ireland, chosen exclusively by Protestant Constituents, has by its own inherent power, and without consulting those constituents, admitted and comprehended the Catholics who were till then, in fact, a separate community) that Parliament cannot associate itself with another Protestant community, represented by a Protestant Parliament, having one interest with itself, and similar in its Laws, its Constitution, and its
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Established Religion? What must be said by those who have at any time been friends to any plan of Parliamentary Reform, and particularly such as have been most recently brought forward, either in Great Britain or Ireland? Whatever may have been thought of the propriety of the Measure, I never heard any doubt of the competency of Parliament to consider and discuss it. Yet I defy any man to maintain the principle of those plans, without contending that, as a Member of Parliament, he possesses a right to concur in disfranchising those who sent him to Parliament, and to select others, by whom he was not elected, in their stead. I am sure that no sufficient distinction, in point of principle, can be successfully maintained for a single moment; nor should I deem it necessary to dwell on this point, in the manner I do, were I not convinced that it is connected in part with all those false and dangerous notions on the subject of Government which have lately become too prevalent in the world. It may, in fact, be traced to that gross perversion of the principles of all political society, which rests on the supposition that there exists continually in every Go-

vernment a Sovereignty *in abeyance* (as it were) on the part of the People, ready to be called forth on every occasion, or rather, on every pretence, when it may suit the purposes of the party or faction who are the advocates of this doctrine to suppose an occasion for its exertion. It is in these false principles that are contained the seeds of all the misery, desolation, and ruin, which in the present day have spread themselves over so large a proportion of the habitable Globe.

These principles, Sir, are, at length, so well known and understood in their practical effects, that they can no longer hope for one enlightened or intelligent advocate, when they appear in their true colours. Yet, with all the horror we all feel, in common with the rest of the World, at the effect of them, with all the confirmed and increasing love and veneration which we feel towards the Constitution of our Country, founded as it is, both in Theory and Experience, on principles directly the reverse; yet, there are too many among us, who, while they abhor and reject such opinions, when presented to them in their naked deformity, suffer them in a more disguised shape
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to be gradually infused into their minds, and insensibly to influence and bias their sentiments and arguments on the greatest and most important discussions. This concealed poison is now more to be dreaded than any open attempt to support such principles by argument or to enforce them by arms. No society, whatever be its particular form, can long subsist, if this principle is once admitted. In every Government, there must reside somewhere a supreme, absolute, and unlimited authority. This is equally true of every lawful Monarchy—of every Aristocracy—of every pure Democracy (if indeed such a form of Government ever has existed, or ever can exist)—and of those mixed Constitutions formed and compounded from the others, which we are justly inclined to prefer to any of them. In all these Governments, indeed alike, that power may by possibility be abused, but whether the abuse is such as to justify and call for the interference of the people collectively, or, more properly speaking, of any portion of it, must always be an extreme case and a question of the greatest and most perilous responsibility, not in Law only, but in Conscience and in Duty, to all those who either act upon it themselves,

themselves, or persuade others to do so. But no provision for such a case ever has been or can be made before-hand; it forms no chapter in any known code of laws, it can find no place in any system of human jurisprudence. But, above all, if such a principle can make no part of any established Constitution, not even of those where the Government is so framed as to be most liable to the abuse of its powers, it will be preposterous indeed to suppose that it can be admitted in one where those powers are so distributed and balanced as to furnish the best security against the probability of such an abuse. Shall that principle be sanctioned as a necessary part of the best Government, which cannot be admitted to exist even as a check upon the worst! Pregnant as it is with danger and confusion, shall it be received and established in proportion as every reason which can ever make it necessary to recur to it is not likely to exist? Yet, Sir, I know not how it is, that, in proportion as we are less likely to have occasion for so desperate a remedy, in proportion as a Government is so framed as to provide within itself the best guard and control on the exercise of every branch of authority, to furnish the means
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of preventing or correcting every abuse of power, and to secure, by its own natural operation, a due attention to the interest and feelings of every part of the community, in that very proportion persons have been found perverse enough to imagine, that such a Constitution admits and recognizes, as a part of it, that which is inconsistent with the nature of any Government, and above all, inapplicable to our own.

I have said more, Sir, upon this subject than I should have thought necessary, if I had not felt that this false and dangerous mockery of the *Sovereignty of the People* is in truth one of the chief elements of Jacobinism, one of the favourite impostures to mislead the understanding, and to flatter and inflame the passions of the mass of mankind, who have not the opportunity of examining and exposing it, and that as such on every occasion, and in every shape in which it appears, it ought to be combated and resisted by every friend to civil order, and to the peace and happiness of mankind.

Sir, the next and not the least prevalent objection, is one which is contained in words which are an appeal to a natural and laudable, but what

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I must call an erroneous and mistaken sense of national pride. It is an appeal to the generous and noble passions of a nation easily inflamed under any supposed attack upon its honour, I mean the attempt to represent the question of a Union by compact between the Parliaments of the two Kingdoms as a question involving the Independance of Ireland.—It has been said, that no compensation could be made to any country for the surrender of its National Independance. Sir, on this, as well as on every part of the question, I am desirous Gentlemen should come closely to the point, that they should sift it to the bottom, and ascertain upon what grounds and principles their opinion really rests. Do they mean to maintain that in any humiliating, in any degrading sense of the word which can be acted upon practically as a rule, and which can lead to any useful conclusion, that at any time when the Government of any two separate Countries unite in forming one more extensive empire, that the individuals who compose either of the former narrow societies are afterwards less members of an independant country, or to any valuable and useful purpose less possessed of political freedom or civil

civil happiness than they were before. It must be obvious to every Gentleman who will look at the subject, in tracing the history of all the countries, the most proud of their present existing independance, of all the nations in Europe, there is not one that could exist in the state in which it now stands, if that principle had been acted upon by our forefathers; and Europe must have remained to this hour in a state of ignorance and barbarism, from the perpetual warfare of independent and petty states. In the instance of our own Country, it would be a superfluous waste of time to enumerate the steps by which all its parts were formed into one Kingdom; but will any man in general assert, that in all the different Unions which have formed the principal states of Europe, their inhabitants have become less free, that they have had less of which to be proud, less scope for their own exertions, than they had in their former situation. If this doctrine is to be generally maintained, what becomes of the situation at this hour of any one county of England, or of any one county of Ireland, now united under the independant Parliament of that Kingdom? If it be pushed to its full extent, it is obviously incompatible with all civil society. As

the former principle of the sovereignty of the people strikes at the foundation of all governments, so this is equally hostile to all political confederacy, and mankind must be driven back to what is called the state of nature.

But while I combat this general and abstract principle, which would operate as an objection to every union between separate states, on the ground of the sacrifice of independance, do I mean to contend that there is in no case just ground for such a statement? Far from it: it may become, on many occasions, the first duty of a free and generous people. If there exists a country which contains within itself the means of military protection, the naval force necessary for its defence, which furnishes objects of industry sufficient for the subsistence of its inhabitants, and pecuniary resources adequate to maintaining, with dignity, the rank which it has attained among the nations of the world; if, above all, it enjoys the blessings of internal content and tranquillity, and possesses a distinct constitution of its own, the defects of which, if any, it is within itself capable of correcting, and if that constitution be equal, if not superior, to that of any other in the world, or (which is nearly the same thing)

thing) if those who live under it believe it to be so, and fondly cherish that opinion, I can indeed well understand that such a country must be jealous of any measure, which, even by its own consent, under the authority of its own lawful government, is to associate it as a part of a larger and more extensive empire.

But, Sir, if, on the other hand, it should happen that there be a country which, against the greatest of all dangers that threaten its peace and security, has not adequate means of protecting itself without the aid of another nation ; if that other be a neighbouring and kindred nation, speaking the same language, whose laws, whose customs, and habits are the same in principle, but carried to a greater degree of perfection, with a more extensive commerce, and more abundant means of acquiring and diffusing national wealth ; the stability of whose government—the excellence of whose constitution—is more than ever the admiration and envy of Europe, and of which the very Country of which we are speaking can only boast an inadequate and imperfect resemblance ;—under such circumstances, I would ask, what conduct would be prescribed by every

rational principle of dignity, of honour, or of interest? I would ask, whether this is not a faithful description of the circumstances which ought to dispose Ireland to a Union? Whether Great Britain is not precisely the nation with which, on these principles, a Country, situated as Ireland is, would desire to unite? Does a Union, under such circumstances, by free consent, and on just and equal terms, deserve to be branded as a proposal for subjecting Ireland to a foreign yoke?—Is it not rather the free and voluntary association of two great Countries, which join, for their common benefit, in one Empire, where each will retain its proportional weight and importance, under the security of equal laws, reciprocal affection, and inseparable interests, and which want nothing but that indissoluble Connection to render both invincible.

*Non ego nec Teucris Italos parere jubebo
Nec nova regna peto ; paribus se legibus ambæ
Invictæ gentes æterna in fœdera mittant.*

Sir, I have nearly stated all that is necessary for me to trouble the House with ; there are, however, one or two other objections which I wish not entirely to pass over : One of them is, a
general

general notion that a Union with Great Britain must necessarily increase one of the greatest evils of Ireland, by producing depopulation in many parts of the Country, and by increasing greatly the number of absentees. I do not mean to deny that this effect would, to a limited extent, take place during a part of the year; but I think it will not be difficult for me to prove, that this circumstance will be more than counterbalanced by the operation of the system in other respects.

If it be true that this measure has an inevitable tendency to admit the introduction of that British Capital which is most likely to give life to all the operations of Commerce, and to all the improvements of Agriculture; if it be that which above all other considerations is most likely to give security, quiet, and internal repose to Ireland; if it is likely to remove the chief bar to the internal advancement of wealth and of civilization, by a more intimate intercourse with England; if it is more likely to communicate from hence those habits which distinguish this Country, and which, by a continued gradation, unite the highest and the lowest orders of the community without a chasm in any part of the system; if it

is not only likely to invite (as I have already said) Eng^lish Capital to set Commerce in motion, but to offer it the use of new markets, to open fresh resources of wealth and industry; can wealth, can industry, can civilization increase among the whole bulk of the people without its much more than counterbalancing the partial effect of the removal of the few individuals who, for a small part of the year, would follow the seat of Legislation? Will it be supposed that the mere absence of Parliament from Dublin, if it would still remain the centre of Education and of the internal commerce of a country increasing in improvement; if it would still remain the seat of legal discussion, which must always increase with an increase of property and occupation, what ground is there to suppose, with a view even to the interests of those whose partial interests have been most successfully appealed to; what reason is there to suppose that, with a view either to the respectable Body of the Bar, to the Merchant, or Shopkeeper of Dublin (if it were possible to suppose that a transaction of this sort ought to be referred to that single criterion) that they would not find their proportionate share of advantage in the general advantage

advantage of the State? Let it be remembered, also, that if the transfer of the Seat of Legislature may call from Ireland to England the Members of the United Parliament, yet, after the Union, property, influence and consideration in Ireland will lead, as much as in Great Britain, to all the objects of imperial ambition; and there must, consequently, exist a new incitement to persons to acquire property in that Country, and to those who possess it, to reside there and to cultivate the good opinion of those with whom they live, and to extend and improve their influence and connections.

But, Sir, I need not dwell longer on argument, however it may satisfy my own mind, because we can on this question refer to experience. I see every Gentleman anticipates that I allude to Scotland. What has been the result of the Union there? A Union, give me leave to say, as much opposed, and by much the same arguments, prejudices, and misconceptions, as are urged, at this moment, creating too the same alarms, and provoking the same outrages, as have lately taken place in Dublin. Look at the
metropolis

metropolis of Scotland: the population of Edinburgh has been more than doubled since the Union, and a new city added to the old. But we may be told, that Edinburgh has engrossed all the commerce of that country, and has those advantages which Dublin cannot expect. Yet while Edinburgh, deprived of its Parliament, but retaining, as Dublin would retain, its Courts of Justice; continuing, as Dublin would continue, the resort of those whose circumstances would not permit them to visit a distant metropolis; continuing, as Dublin would continue, the seat of national education, while Edinburgh has baffled all the predictions of that period, what has been the situation of Glasgow? The population of Glasgow, since the Union, has increased in the proportion of between five and six to one: look at its progress in manufactures; look at its general advantages, and tell me what ground there is, judging by experience in aid of theory, for those gloomy apprehensions which have been so industriously excited.

There remains, Sir, another general line of argument, which I have already anticipated, and I hope answered, that the commercial privileges
now

now enjoyed by Ireland, and to which it owes so much of its prosperity, would be less secure than at present. I have given an answer to that already, by stating that they are falsely imputed to the independence of the Irish Parliament, for that they are in fact owing to the exercise of the voluntary discretion of the British Parliament, unbound by compact, prompted only by its natural disposition to consider the interests of Ireland the same as its own; and if that has been done while Ireland is only united to us in the imperfect and precarious manner in which it is, while it has a separate Parliament, notwithstanding the commercial jealousies of our own manufactures; if under these circumstances we have done so, if we have done so with no other connection than that which now subsists, and while Ireland has no share in our representation; what fresh ground can there be for apprehension, when she will have her proportionate weight in the Legislature, and will be united with us as closely as Lancashire or Yorkshire, or any other county in Great Britain.

Sir, I have seen it under the same authority to which I am sorry so often to advert, that the

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Linen Trade would be injured, and that there will be no security for its retaining its present advantages. I have already stated to you (and with that very authority in my favour) that those advantages are at present precarious, and that their security can only arise from Compact with Great Britain. Such a Compact, this Measure would establish in the most solemn manner; but besides this, Sir, the natural policy of this Country, not merely its experienced liberality, but the identity of Interests after a Union, would offer a security worth a thousand Compacts.

Sir, the only other general topic of objection is (that upon which great pains have been taken to raise an alarm in Ireland) the idea that the main principle of the Measure was to subject Ireland to a load of Debt and an increase of Taxes, and to expose her to the consequences of all our alledged difficulties and supposed necessities.

Sir, I hope the zeal, the spirit, and the liberal and enlarged policy, of this Country, has given ample proof that it is not from a pecuniary motive that we seek an Union. If it is not
desirable

desirable on the grounds I have stated, it cannot be recommended for the mere purpose of Taxation ; but to quiet any jealousy on this subject, here again let us look to Scotland: is there any instance where, with 45 Members on her part and 513 on ours, that that part of the United Kingdom has paid more than its proportion to the general burthens?—Is it then, Sir, any ground of apprehension, that we are likely to tax Ireland more heavily when she becomes associated with ourselves?—To tax in its due proportion the whole of the Empire, to the utter exclusion of the idea of the predominance of one part of society over another, is the great characteristic of British Finance, as Equality of Laws is of the British Constitution.

But, Sir, in addition to this, if we come to the details of this proposition, it is in our power to fix, for any number of years which shall be thought fit, the proportion by which the Contribution of Ireland, to the expences of the State, shall be regulated; that these proportions shall not be such as would make a contribution greater than the necessary amount of its own present necessary

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expences

expences as a separate Kingdom ; and, even after that limited period, the proportion of the whole contribution, from time to time, might be made to depend on the comparative produce, in each Kingdom, of such general taxes as might be thought to afford the best criterion of their respective wealth. Or, what I should hope would be found practicable, the system of internal taxation in each county might gradually be so equalized and assimilated, on the leading articles, as to make all rules of specific proportion unnecessary, and to secure, that Ireland shall never be taxed but in proportion as we tax ourselves.

The application of these principles, however, will form matter of future discussion ; I mention them only as strongly shewing, from the misrepresentation which has taken place on this part of the subject, how incumbent it is upon the House to receive these propositions, and to adopt, after due deliberation, such resolutions as may record to Ireland the terms upon which we are ready to meet her. And, in the mean time, let us wait, not without impatience, but without dissatisfaction, for that moment, when the effect of reason and
discussion

discussion may reconcile the minds of men, in that Kingdom, to a Measure which I am sure will be found as necessary for their peace and happiness, as it will be conducive to the general security and advantage of the British Empire.

Sir, it remains to be my duty to lay these Resolutions before the House, wishing that the more detailed discussion of them may be reserved to a future day.

RESOLUTIONS.

FIRST.

That in order to promote and secure the essential Interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the Strength, Power, and Resources of the British Empire, it will be adviseable to concur in such measures as may best tend to unite the two Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into one Kingdom, in such manner, and on such Terms and Conditions as may be established by Acts of the respective Parliaments of His Majesty's said Kingdoms.

SECOND.

That it appears to this Committee that it would be fit to propose as the first Article to serve as a Basis of the said Union, that the said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall, upon a day to be agreed upon, be united into one Kingdom, by the name of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

THIRD.

THIRD.

That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose that the Succession to the Monarchy and the Imperial Crown of the said United Kingdoms, shall continue limited and settled, in the same manner as the Imperial Crown of the said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing Laws, and to the Terms of the Union between England and Scotland.

FOURTH.

That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose that the said United Kingdom be represented in one and the same Parliament, to be stiled the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and that such a number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and such a number of Members of the House of Commons as shall be hereafter agreed upon by Acts of the respective Parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said Parliament on the part of Ireland, and shall be summoned, chosen and returned, in such manner as shall be fixed by an Act of the Parliament of Ireland previous to the said Union; and that every Member hereafter to sit and vote in the said Parliament of the United Kingdom shall, until the said Parliament shall otherwise provide, take and subscribe the same Oaths, and make the same Declarations as are by Law required to be taken, subscribed and made by the Members of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

FIFTH.

That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose that the Churches of England and Ireland, and the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government thereof, shall be preserved as now by Law Established.

SIXTH,

SIXTH.

That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose that His Majesty's Subjects in Ireland shall at all times hereafter be entitled to the same privileges, and be on the same footing in respect of Trade and Navigation, in all Ports and Places belonging to Great Britain, and in all cases with respect to which Treaties shall be made by His Majesty, his Heirs or Successors, with any Foreign Power, as His Majesty's Subjects in Great Britain; that no Duty shall be imposed on the Import or Export between Great Britain and Ireland of any Articles now Duty free: and that on other Articles there shall be established, for a time to be limited, such a moderate rate of equal Duties as shall, previous to the Union, be agreed upon and approved by the respective Parliaments, subject, after the expiration of such limited time, to be diminished equally with respect to both Kingdoms, but in no case to be increased; that all Articles which may at any time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from Foreign Parts, shall be importable through either Kingdom into the other, subject to the like Duties and Regulations as if the same were imported directly from Foreign Parts; that where any Articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of either Kingdom, are subject to any internal Duty in one Kingdom, such countervailing Duties (over and above any Duties on import to be fixed as aforesaid) shall be imposed as shall be necessary to prevent any inequality in that respect: and that all other matters of Trade and Commerce other than the foregoing, and than such others as may before the Union be specially agreed upon for the due encouragement of the Agriculture and Manufactures of the respective Kingdoms, shall remain to be regulated from time to time by the United Parliament.

SEVENTH.

SEVENTH.

That for the like purpose it would be fit to propose, that the charge arising from the payment of the Interest of Sinking-Fund for the reduction of the Principal of the Debt incurred in either Kingdom before the Union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively. That for a number of Years to be limited, the future ordinary expences of the UNITED KINGDOM, in Peace or War, shall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such proportions as shall be established by the respective Parliaments previous to the Union; and that after the expiration of the time to be so limited, the proportion shall not be liable to be varied, except according to such rates and principles as shall be in like manner agreed upon previous to the Union.

EIGHTH.

That for the like purpose it would be fit to propose, that all Laws in force at the time of the Union, and that all the Courts of Civil or Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction within the respective Kingdoms, shall remain as now by Law established within the same, subject only to such alterations or regulations from time to time as circumstances may appear to the Parliament of the UNITED KINGDOM to require.

That the foregoing RESOLUTIONS be laid before His Majesty with an humble ADDRESS, assuring His Majesty that we have proceeded with the utmost attention to the consideration of the important objects recommended to us in His Majesty's Gracious MESSAGE.

That we entertain a firm persuasion that a COMPLETE AND INTIRE UNION between Great Britain and Ireland, founded on equal and liberal principles, on the similarity

of

of Laws, Constitution and Government, and on a sense of mutual Interests and Affections, by promoting the Security, Wealth and Commerce of the respective Kingdoms, and by allaying the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, must afford fresh means of opposing at all times an effectual resistance to the destructive Projects of our Foreign and Domestic Enemies, and must tend to confirm and augment the Stability, Power, and Resources of the Empire.

Impressed with these considerations, we feel it our duty humbly to lay before his Majesty such Propositions as appear to us best calculated to form the basis of such a settlement, leaving it to His Majesty's wisdom, at such time and in such manner as His Majesty, in his Parental Solitude for the happiness of his People, shall judge fit, to communicate these Propositions to His Parliament of Ireland, with whom we shall be at all times ready to concur in all such Measures as may be found most conducive to the accomplishment of this great and salutary Work. And we trust that, after full and mature consideration, such a Settlement may be framed and established, by the deliberative Consent of the Parliaments of both Kingdoms, as may be conformable to the Sentiments, Wishes, and real Interests of His Majesty's faithful Subjects of Great Britain and Ireland, and may unite them inseparably in the full enjoyment of the blessings of our free and invaluable Constitution, in the support of the Honour and Dignity of His Majesty's Crown, and in the preservation and advancement of the Welfare and Prosperity of the whole British Empire,

APPENDIX.

The following Message was presented in the House of Commons by Mr. Fox, Secretary of State, on the 9th of April, 1782.

GEORGE R.

HIS Majesty being concerned to find that discontents and jealousies are prevailing among his loyal Subjects in Ireland, upon matters of great weight and importance, earnestly recommends to this House, to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a Final Adjustment as may give mutual satisfaction to both Kingdoms.

G. R.

1st May

1st May, 1782.

Mr. Secretary Fox presented to the House, by His Majesty's command,

Copy of the Message to the House of Lords and Commons in Ireland, from His Grace the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, delivered the 16th April, 1782: And also,

Copy of a Resolution of the House of Lords in Ireland, Mercurii, 17^o die Aprilis, 1782: And also,

Copy of a Resolution of the House of Commons in Ireland, Martis, 16^o die Aprilis, 1782.

And the Titles of the said Copies were read.

The said Copies are as followeth; viz.

Copy of the Message to the Houses of Lords and Commons in Ireland, from His Grace the Lord Lieutenant, delivered the 16th April, 1782.

PORTLAND,

I have it in command from His Majesty, to inform this House, that His Majesty being con-

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concerned

concerned to find that discontents and jealousies are prevailing among his loyal Subjects of this Country, upon matters of great weight and importance, His Majesty recommends to this House to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a Final Adjustment as may give mutual satisfaction to his Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland,

P,

*Copy of a Resolution of the House of Lords in
Ireland, Mercurii, 17^o die Aprilis, 1782.*

RESOLVED, By the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled *Nemine dissentiente*, That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, to return him our thanks for the most gracious Message sent to this House by his Majesty's command, through the medium of His Grace the Lord Lieutenant, and to assure him of our most unshaken loyalty and attachment to His Majesty's person and government, and of the lively sense we entertain of his paternal care of his people of Ireland, in thus enquiring into the
discontents

discontents and jealousies that subsist amongst them, in order to such Final Adjustment as may give mutual satisfaction to his kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland.

That, thus encouraged by his Royal Interposition, we shall beg leave, with all duty and affection, to lay before His Majesty the cause of such discontents and jealousies,

To represent to His Majesty, That His Subjects of Ireland are entitled to a free constitution; that the Imperial Crown of Ireland is inseparably annexed to the Crown of Great-Britain, on which Connection the happiness of both nations essentially depends; but that the Kingdom of Ireland is a distinct dominion, having a Parliament of her own, the sole Legislature thereof.

That there is no power whatsoever competent to make laws to bind this nation, except the King, Lords, and Commons, of Ireland; upon which exclusive Right of Legislation we consider the very essence of our liberties to depend, a Right which we claim as the Birth-right of the People of Ireland,

land, and which we are determined, in every situation of life, to assert and maintain.

To represent to His Majesty, That we have seen with concern certain claims, both of legislature and judicature, asserted by the Parliament of Great Britain, in an Act passed in Great Britain in the sixth year of George the First, intituled
 “ An Act for the better securing the Dependency of Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain ;”

That we conceive the said Act, and the powers thereby claimed, to be the great and principal causes of the discontents and jealousies that subsist in this Kingdom ;

To assure His Majesty, That this House considers it as a matter of constitutional right and protection, that all Bills which become Law should receive the approbation of His Majesty, under the Seal of Great Britain ; but we consider the practice of suppressing our Bills in the Council of Ireland, or altering them any where, to be a matter which calls for redress :

To

To represent to His Majesty, That an Act intituled “ An Act for the better Accommodation “ of His Majesty’s Forces ;” being unlimited in duration, but which, from the particular circumstances of the times, passed into a law, has been the cause of much jealousy and discontent in this Kingdom :

That we have thought it our duty to lay before His Majesty these, the principal causes of the discontents and jealousies subsisting in this Kingdom :

That we have the greatest reliance on His Majesty’s wisdom, the most sanguine expectations from his virtuous choice of a Chief Governor, and the greatest confidence in the wise and constitutional Council His Majesty has adopted :

That we have, moreover, a high sense and veneration for the British Character, and do therefore conceive, that the proceedings of this country, founded as they are in right, and supported by constitutional liberty, must have excited the approbation and esteem of the British nation :

That

That we are the more confirmed in this hope, inasmuch as the people of this Kingdom have never expressed a desire to share the freedom of Great Britain, without at the same time declaring their determination to share her fate, standing or falling with the British nation.

Wm. Watts Gayer } Cler.
Edw. Gayer } Parliament.

*Copy of a Resolution of the House of Commons in
Ireland, Martis, 16^o die Aprilis, 1782.*

RESOLVED, That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, to return His Majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious message to this House, signified by his Grace the Lord Lieutenant. To assure His Majesty of our unshaken attachment to His Majesty's Person and Government, and of our lively sense of his Paternal Care, in thus taking the lead to administer content to His Majesty's subjects of Ireland; that thus encouraged by his royal interposition, we shall beg leave, with all duty and affection, to lay before His Majesty the causes of our discontents

tents and jealousies : To assure His Majesty, that his subjects of Ireland are a free People ; that the Crown of Ireland is an Imperial Crown, inseparably annexed to the Crown of Great Britain, on which Connexion the interests and happiness of both Nations essentially depend ; but that the kingdom of Ireland is a distinct Kingdom, with a Parliament of her own, the sole Legislature thereof ; that there is no body of men competent to make Laws to bind this nation, except the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, nor any other Parliament which hath any authority or power of any sort whatsoever in this country, save only the Parliament of Ireland : To assure His Majesty, that we humbly conceive, that in this Right the very Essence of our Liberties exist ; a Right which we, on the part of all the People of Ireland, do claim as their birth-right, and which we cannot yield but with our lives : To assure His Majesty, that we have seen with concern certain Claims advanced by the Parliament of Great Britain, in an act, intituled, An Act for the “ better securing the Dependency of Ireland ;” an act containing matter entirely irreconcilable to the fundamental Rights of this Nation ; that

we consider this act, and the claims it advances, to be the great and principle cause of the discontents and jealousies in this Kingdom: To assure His Majesty, that His Majesty's Commons of Ireland do most sincerely wish, that all Bills which become Law in Ireland should receive the approbation of His Majesty, under the Seal of Great Britain; but that yet we do consider the Practice of suppressing our Bills in the Council of Ireland, or altering the same any where, to be another just cause of discontent and jealousy: To assure His Majesty, that an Act, intituled, "An Act for the better Accommodation of His Majesty's Forces," being unlimited in duration, and defective in other instances (but passed in that shape from the particular circumstances of the times) is another just cause of discontent and jealousy in this Kingdom: That we have submitted these, the principal causes of the present discontent and jealousy in Ireland, and remain in humble expectation of redress; that we have the greatest reliance on His Majesty's wisdom, the most sanguine expectations from his virtuous choice of a Chief Governor, and great confidence in the wise, auspicious, and constitutional councils which

which we see with satisfaction His Majesty has adopted; that we have moreover a high sense and veneration for the British character, and do therefore conceive, that the proceedings of this country, founded as they are in right, and tempered by duty, must have excited the approbation and esteem, instead of wounded the pride, of the British Nation; and we beg leave to assure His Majesty, that we are the more confirmed in this hope, inasmuch as the people of this Kingdom have never expressed a desire to share the freedom of England, without declaring a determination to share her fate likewise, standing and falling with the British nation.

THO. ELLIS, *Cler. Par. Dom. Com.*

ORDERED, That the said Copies do lie upon the Table, to be perused by the Members of the House.

17th May, 1782.

RESOLVED, That this House will, immediately, resolve itself into a Committee of the whole
N 2 House.

House, to take into consideration His Majesty's most gracious Message, of the 9th Day of April last, relative to the State of Ireland.

ORDERED, That the several papers which were presented to the House, by Mr. Secretary Fox, upon the 1st day of this instant May, be referred to the said Committee.

Then the House resolved itself into the said Committee.

Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

Mr. Powys took the Chair of the Committee.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

Mr. Powys reported from the Committee, That they had come to several Resolutions; which they had directed him to report, when the House will please to receive the same.

ORDERED, That the Report be now received.

Mr.

Mr. Powys accordingly reported, from the said Committee, the Resolutions which the Committee had directed him to report to the House, which he read in his place, and afterwards delivered in at the Clerk's table; where the same were read; and are as follows : *viz.*

RESOLVED, That it is the Opinion of this Committee, That an Act, made in the sixth year of the reign of his late Majesty King George the First, intituled, "An Act for the better
"securing the Dependency of the Kingdom of
"Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain," ought to be repealed.

RESOLVED, that it is the Opinion of this Committee, That it is indispensable to the interests and happiness of both Kingdoms, that the Connexion between them should be established, by mutual consent, upon a solid and permanent Basis.

The said Resolutions, being severally read a second time, were, upon the Question severally put thereupon, agreed to by the House, *Nemini Contradicensi.*

ORDERED,

ORDERED, That leave be given to bring in a Bill for repealing an Act made in the sixth year of the reign of his late Majesty, King George the First, intituled “ An Act for the better securing “ the Dependency of the Kingdom of Ireland “ upon the Crown of Great Britain;” and that Mr. Secretary Fox, Mr. Thomas Pitt, Mr. Powys, and Lord John Cavendish, do prepare and bring in the same.

RESOLVED, That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, That His Majesty will be graciously pleased to take such measures as His Majesty in His Royal Wisdom shall think most conducive to the establishing, by mutual consent, the Connexion between this Kingdom and the Kingdom of Ireland upon a solid and permanent basis.

ORDERED, That the said Address be presented to His Majesty, by such Members of this House as are of His Majesty’s most honourable Privy Council.

22d May,

22d May, 1782.

Mr. Secretary Fox reported to the House, That His Majesty had been attended with the Address of this House, of Friday last, which His Majesty had been pleased to receive very graciously ; and that His Majesty had commanded him to acquaint this House, that he will immediately take such measures as may be most likely to conduce to the establishment of a Connexion between this Kingdom and the Kingdom of Ireland upon a solid and permanent basis.

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND.

August 12, 1785.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer [Mr. FOSTER] seconded the motion,* and resumed. To such wretched shifts are gentlemen driven, who attempt to support what is not supportable, and would vainly endeavour to persuade you that this measure trenches on the independence of our Legislature; you need not adopt any laws that Great Britain may pass for the regulation of commerce; if you do not approve them, you may reject them whenever you think proper; you do but reject the benefit of the condition, and return to the situation in which you now are; but the same Member has proved most strongly the necessity of introducing the Bill, for when such abilities as his can totally mis-

* “ That leave be given to bring in a Bill, for effectuating the intercourse and commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, on permanent and equitable principles, for the mutual benefit of both Kingdoms.”

conceive

conceive its tendency, it ought to be introduced, in order to be fully understood. He has observed largely on each Proposition, and nothing was ever so mistated, misrepresented and misunderstood, as every part of them has been by him. It would be absurd to follow him through all his errors, many of them the most ignorant child would be ashamed to advance; but I will point out a few, not perhaps so obvious without examination.

Let me first take notice of his having alluded to me, and said, that I voted against a declaration of Rights. I deny it; I declared my opinion of the independence of our Legislature, from this very seat, early in the debate on that day; but did *he* vote for it? *He did not*, and I repeat the Hon. Gentleman did not vote for it, but lamented that the subject had been brought in that day.

—— I shall leave this subject as a lesson to the Hon. Gentleman, never for the future to charge facts that are unfounded. I shall now proceed to the Hon. Gentleman's observations.

He says “ mark the cunning with which the
 “ resolutions are drawn, to the injury of Ire-
 “ land ; there is no new prohibition to be allow-
 “ ed on the import from one country to ano-
 “ ther.” This is certainly a great evil, especi-
 ally if we consider that the Exportation of Irish
 products to England amounts to TWO MILLIONS
 and an HALF annually—and the Exportation of
 British products to Ireland amount but to ONE
 MILLION, so it is injurious to a country which
 may by prohibition lose two millions and an
 half, to stipulate against prohibitions, and the
 country that sends more than she takes, is not
 wise in guarding against mutual prohibition.

Another discovery the Hon. Gentleman has
 made is that countervailing duties are unfair—why ?
 Because the Brewery of Ireland will thereby be
 effectually protected. The Hon. Gentleman com-
 plains of the Report of the English Privy Coun-
 cil, who say that to put Ireland and England on
 a footing of exact reciprocity as to linen, Ire-
 land ought to give a bounty on the Exportation
 of English Linens, because England gives a
 bounty

bounty on the exportation of Irish Linens. Can any thing be more just? Yet England makes no such demand, but is ready by this adjustment to give additional security to our Linen trade for ever. If indeed the adjustment were to take away the benefit from Ireland, it would be a good cause for rejecting it; but as it for ever confirms all the advantages we derive from our Linen trade, and binds England from making any law that can be injurious to it; surely Gentlemen who regard that trade, and whose fortunes and rent depend on its prosperity, will not entertain a moment's doubt about embracing the offer.

Another of his curious objections is, that as we have not a navy of our own, and if we assist the navy of the empire, England will turn that navy to her own ambitious purposes. To what ambitious purposes? To the protection of that commerce, and of those colonies which are now to become ours.—In the moment that she gives up her monopoly of colonies, she is accused of ambitious purpose, for her separate aggrandizement.

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The Hon. Gentleman complains, that the Bill now before the English Parliament makes it necessary that every proper and authentic document to prevent smuggling should be sent by the revenue officers of this country with any foreign or plantation goods sent from hence to England, but that the same precaution is not taken with regard to the same kind of goods sent from England to Ireland. This is the strongest argument for waiting the introduction of the Irish Bill; it speaks the consciousness of the English Parliament, that they could not prescribe to our revenue officers what documents should be satisfactory to them on receiving goods from England, but that the Irish Parliament alone in their own Bill, could determine that matter. It shews the Hon. Gentleman to be totally ignorant of what either is or ought to be the substance of the Bill.

The Hon. Gentleman talks of bounties, and says, by abolishing bounties, we shall no longer be able to bring corn to this city; our inland corn bounties, he says, are to be turned into Protecting Duties for England. A strange conception! But why has he fixed on corn and flour?

If he had read the Resolution on which he is arguing, he would have seen that corn and flour are every where exempted.

Another argument of the Hon. Gentleman is, that the declaring that neither country hereafter can lay any new prohibition on native productions, implies cunningly that it may on foreign. What an argument! when the very first principles of the system is, that a mutual interchange of foreign commodities is for ever to take place between the two kingdoms, and one even of the Twenty Propositions declares it in precise terms— But, the Hon. Gentleman talks of prohibitions on exports, &c. Would the Hon. Gentleman wish to leave it in the power of either nation to prohibit their native commodities from being exported to the other? would he wish to leave it in the power of England to prohibit the exportation of coals, salt, iron, bark, hops, and many other articles, or to raise a revenue on these articles when exported hither.

The Hon. Gentleman talks particularly of wool. I admit, if you balance wool against wool, that

his

his argument is right; but the just way is to balance the whole of the exports;—England engages never to prohibit the export of articles which are necessary almost to our existence, and we engage not to prohibit the export of articles which bring us in 500,000*l.* a year. We are to engage not to prohibit the export of Woollen and Linen Yarn, which we have exported for a whole century, and without keeping a market for the redundancy of which by export, we could *not* ensure plenty for own manufactures.

The Gentleman too totally mistakes the case of patents and copy-rights. British patents and copy-rights are protected in Britain by prohibition against import. The Resolutions say to us, “protect your’s in like manner;” a measure never yet adopted here, which must promote genius, printing, and invention in Ireland.

I am ashamed, Sir, of taking up so much of your time on a subject which might be so easily understood by the lowest capacity; I shall therefore quit the Hon. Gentleman and come to the question of constitution, which I do not at all think

think involved in this subject. If Great Britain grants us a full partnership in all her trade, in all her colonies, if she admits us to a full participation in the benefits of her Navigation laws, by which she has raised herself to the greatest commercial power in the world; if she does not call upon us to contribute to the expence of the partnership, but merely to receive our share of the profits, and says, we may continue in that partnership only so long as we chuse, can any man say, the conditions of it amount to a surrender of our legislature? surely not, it is idle speculation. Let us then look at the subject, free from all imaginary dread for the constitution.

Britain imports annually from us 2,500,000*l.* of our products, all, or very nearly all, duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on them. We import about a 1,000,000*l.* of hers, and raise a revenue on almost every article of it, and reserve the power of continuing that revenue. She exports to us salt for our fisheries and provisions; hops which we cannot grow; coals which we cannot raise; tin which we have not; and bark which we cannot get elsewhere; and all these without reserving

reserving any duty ; or a power to impose any on them ; though her own subjects pay 2, 3, or 4s. a chaldron for her own coals, sent coastways, and in London 7s. We on the contrary charge a duty for our own use here on almost every article we send to her. So much for exports ; now as to bounties, she almost ruined our manufacture of sail-cloth, by bounties on export of her own to Ireland. In 1750, or thereabouts, when her bounty commenced, we exported more than we imported, and in 1784, we exported none, and imported 180,000 yards ; she now withdraws that bounty. And let me digress here a little on sail-cloth, which although gentlemen affect to despise when mentioned, will, I trust, be an immediate source of wealth by this adjustment. For 1. This bounty is to be removed. 2. The export of sail-cloth to the Indies is to be allowed, and Great Britain exported there, in 1782, about 200,000 ells. 3. There is a British law, obliging every British and colony ship to have its first suits of British sail-cloth. Irish now is to be deemed British. 4. There is a preference of 2d. an ell given by British law to British sail-cloth, over foreign, for the British navy. Irish is now to have the

same

same preference. 5. The surplus of the hereditary revenue is to be applied in the first place to the purchase of Irish sail-cloth. All these give a glorious prospect for that valuable manufacture—But to return, were a man to look for the country most advantageous to settle manufacture in, what would be his choice? One where labour and provisions are cheap, that is Ireland; and what he would next look for?—why to have a rich, extended and steady market near him, which England, stretched along-side affords, and to establish that market for this country is one great object of this system. Gentlemen undervalue the reduction of British duties on our manufactures; I agree with them it may not operate soon, but we are to look forward in a final settlement, and it is impossible but that in time, with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we must be able to sell to them. When commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade take its natural and steady course, the kingdoms will cease to look to rivalry, each will make that fabric which it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot make so advantageously. Labour will

be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by duties, bounties, jealousies or legislative interference from its natural and beneficial course, this system will attain its real object, consolidating the strength of the remaining parts of the empire, by encouraging the communications of their market among themselves, with preference to every part against all strangers.

I need not mention the Navigation Act, the proper benefits of which we have so long looked for ; I will only observe, that Great Britain could never agree to receive the British Colonies' goods from us, unless we prohibited the goods of foreign Colonies as she does, which is a powerful argument for that part of the system against the constitutional phrensy that threatens it. Let us also observe, that now, for the first time, Great Britain offers us a right for ever in all present and future Colonies, without any reservation of power, to call on us either to procure, support, or preserve them; *she* maintains them, *we* share all the profits; and not only their goods, but all goods of Irish produce, are to pass through Britain duty free. Can foreign

reign nations, after this is settled, make distinction between British and Irish goods? Our manufactures will be united as our interests, and we shall laugh at Portugal folly.

I could run out for hours into the many benefits of this system but I have tired the House too long; let me only implore you not to reject this measure, for ill-founded, visionary objections, or to sacrifice realities to shadows. If this infatuated country gives up the present offer, she may look for it again in vain; things cannot remain as they are; commercial jealousy is roused, it will increase with two independent legislatures, if they don't mutually declare the principles whereby their powers shall be separately employed, in directing the common concerns of trade; and without an united interest of commerce, in a commercial empire, political union will receive many shocks, and separation of interest must threaten separation of connexion, which every honest Irishman must shudder ever to look at as a possible event.

I will

I will only add, that if this measure be refused, Ireland will receive more solid injury than from any other evil that ever befel her; it is in vain for Gentlemen to think we can go on as we have done for some years—or to expect to cope with England in a destructive war of bounties—our situation must every day become more difficult, and it is impossible to foresee all the ruinous consequences that may ensue. — — —

AUGUST 15th, 1785,

Right Hon. *Chancellor of the Exchequer* [Mr. FOSTER] I rise to state the misconception of the Right Hon. Gentleman, and if any thing can shew the necessity of curing the people of their infatuation, by publishing and explaining the Bill to them, it surely is this, that a Gentleman to whom they look up, and justly look, as one whose wisdom and virtue will guard their rights, is so very much mistaken.

The Right Hon. Gentleman in his argument has never once adverted to the Bill on your table,
but

but draws all his conclusions from arguments raised by his own imagination, on the British Resolutions. He dwells now only on foreign Colony trade and Navigation laws; the accepting a full participation of the British Colony trade, upon terms of equal laws, he gives up as not altering our constitution, and he even agrees in the innocence of our declaring it as a principle of the treaty. In this he has shewn his wisdom, for it is already declared in the law of Ireland. The objection then stands as to a foreign Colony trade, and what says the Bill, it declares it to be a condition of the treaty, to protect that trade, in the same manner as Britain does, against the interference of foreign Colony goods. It enacts nothing, and there is the mighty evil which we have introduced, that is to give Britain the regulation of all our foreign trade with Portugal, with Spain, with all the world. If the Gentleman so egregiously mistakes the purport of what he has not read, I trust the good sense of the nation will see his mistakes and judge for themselves; but the objections to an agreement of rating only the goods from foreign Colonies, so far only as by protecting our Colonies against them,

them, is not so wonderful from him as his objection to the Bill's affecting Navigation and British seamen in general; from him I say, for in the year 1782 the Right Hon. Gentleman introduced in conjunction with the late Chief Baron Burgh, and the present Chief Baron Yelverton, a Bill, adopting in the gross all such clauses and provisions of the laws theretofore passed in England, as conveyed equal benefits and imposed equal restrictions in commerce, in the most extended sense, to the subjects of both countries, and also putting the seamen of Ireland on the footing of British seamen. [*The Chancellor here read the words.*] The Bill now brought in does not go so far; he went to commerce in general, and adopted laws without reference to them, or even reciting their title. What does this Bill do? it declares with him the principle; it does no more. This Bill declares for a *similarity of laws, manners, and customs*, in toto. Our Bill declares for a similarity of Navigation Laws, on our accepting the benefit of the British, not for the first time offered to us. It is idle to believe, even his authority can have weight in such unfounded objections: nay, *our* Bill reaches *his*,
to

to adopt its principles, and he says our is mischievous; his was the glory of the nation and the joint labour of the greatest friends of liberty.

The Right Hon. Gentleman says, " we might
 " have foreign trade, without entering into the
 " measure, and that England, as to foreign
 " trade, gives us no right which we already have
 " not." As to Colony Trade, he says, " she
 " gives us what we had before, on the former
 " conditions, that we give her Colony product a
 " preference in our market, and therefore, he
 " says, cannot we remain as we now are."

With respect to the Colony Trade, I answer, we hold it by the gift of Britain, and she may repeal her act, and reassume her monopoly. As to Foreign Trade, I have shewn it is no way affected, except by the preference to be given to British Colony goods, against those of Foreign Colonies; but why does the Gentleman allude to Portugal? it is the strongest measure against him. Portugal has presumed to distinguish between the goods of Great Britain and the goods of Ireland

—she

— she will not receive the latter. But if this settlement is entered into, all our goods she can have may go duty free through Britain. The distinction between British and Irish manufacture is lost as to Foreign Nations, our goods, are made one, physically as well as politically, in respect to foreign, and our Union cemented by the freedom of intercourse.

The honourable gentleman seems, with others, to undervalue the British markets for our linens, and that if Britain shall discourage her import, they will find vent elsewhere, I will not pay him so fulsome a compliment as to say he understands commerce, his genius soars perhaps above such reading; but if he did understand it, I would ask him, where would he expect a market to favour the linens of Ireland? Where will he find a market under Heaven for that manufacture, which now brings two millions annually into the kingdom? Will Portugal take them? Will Spain take them? Will France take them? No; we know they will not. Will Russia, Germany, or Holland take them? They are your powerful rivals, and able to undersel you. Where then
will

will you find a market, if England shuts her ports? Will you go to the West Indies?—you cannot go to the English Colonies—they will be like Britain—there you can have no admittance. The French, Spanish, and Portuguese have shut their ports long since—your only market then is in the *bankrupt* States of North America, that have not money to pay their just debts, and many provinces of which, if they had the money, have not perhaps the honesty to do it.

This bankrupt country is to give you the market Britain affords. No, no; cherish the market you have, you will never get so good, she ever exports with bounty for you. And here let me observe the benefits of exporting, duty free, all our fabrics through her ports, which this settlement secures. You first found the way for your linens to foreign places through her ports, by her capitals and extent of dealing;—do not refuse the like for your other fabrics—the prosperity of the linen should teach you.

The gentleman says England is as dependant on Ireland as Ireland is on England for her products—he instances the cotton yarn and other yarn of Ireland. What, call cotton yarn a fabric of Ireland, and an export to Britain!—It is a mistake of his expression, he cannot be so ignorant of our manufactures. Let us look into the wants Britain supplies—I will take coals first.

Do you think it an object of no consequence to receive coals from England, for ever, duty free while, the duties on coals in England, brought from one of her own ports to another is very high. I remember when I proposed a shilling a ton on the importation of coals into Dublin only, in order to raise a fund for extending and beautifying the city, it met with great opposition; I was abused in all the news papers; yet now England may raise four times that sum upon the export of her coals, which will fall upon the consumer, and raise a revenue for her advantage; nay were she even to raise the revenue on them to you that she does on her own coast carriage, what would become of you? You have

have not Irish coal ; if the present bounty of 2s. a ton to Dublin, added to 1s. 8d. duty on British, which operates as 3s. 8d. in favour of Irish coal, what will you do ; because no carriage can be so cheap to you as that across the channel. Rock salt is the next ;—Where will you get it ? (some one said from Spain) Rock salt from Spain ! The gentleman should inform himself a little better.

As to the tanning trade, where will you get bark ? From no place in the world but England. We know that it would not bear the freight from any other, and if England was to prohibit the export of it, that trade must be at an end ; and we must not forget, that the British manufacturers of leather have already complained, that by getting bark from Wales, we are enabled to work on as good terms as England.

Let him look to hops ; will this country grow them ? On the other hand, what wants do we supply for England ? wool and linen yarn, to our own great advantage ; but it is in vain to proceed ; the House must see that we are talking of a subject not yet understood ; when known, and Ire-
land

land unprejudiced and in her calm reason, will never reject the many blessings it holds out to her trade;—it gives wealth and security which I trust will never be refused from a wild imagination of Utopian Republics, Commonwealths, Monarchies—God knows what.

I will stand or fall with the Bill, that not a line in it touches your Constitution; it is now left to the decision of the country, it is not abandoned, God forbid it should; and I trust I shall see the nation ask it at our hands, that we may be able then to obtain it shall be my prayers—the Minister cannot promise—he has done his duty—and it will be my pride at a future day, when its real value shall be known, that I bore a leading share in the transaction—that I laboured to procure for Ireland solid and substantial benefits, which even two years ago no man had an idea of even looking to.



